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RABBINIC JUDAISM AND THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL¹.

It is with great diffidence that I venture to address the company whom I see before me this afternoon. It was, indeed, with much reluctance that I accepted the kind and liberal offer which was made me that I should speak to the St. Paul Association on a matter so delicate and difficult as that which is my subject to-day. First of all, I am no learned scholar, and if it were not that I have had a learned friend upon whose unstinted assistance I could rely, I should have been unable to accept the task at all. But without wearying you further by dwelling in detail upon personal deficiencies—"protesting too much" has an evil sound—let me pass at once to the difficulties inherent in my subject, difficulties which would and should be felt by every honest scholar, however learned and however industrious he might be.

The most exact title for my lecture would, I fancy, be: "The relation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Jewish religion." And Jewish should be understood to mean Rabbinical. Hence, what I have to do, so far as one lecture can do it, lies, as it were, in between the provinces of two other lectures,

¹ An Address delivered before the St. Paul Association on November 21, 1900.

which are closely related to, but not exactly equivalent to my own. Mine partly overlaps the other two, but is not wholly coterminous with them. The one of these two other subjects would be: "The Jewish religion of the first century after Christ." *That* lecture is far wider than mine. It would deal with the Jewish religion as a whole, and deal with it apart from St. Paul. It is a lecture, or rather it is a book, which needs doing because you will not get a fair and full estimate of early Judaism until this constant reference to the dominating figure of Paul is cleared out of the way. But I am speaking to a St. Paul association, and therefore your interest in Judaism is rightly and properly relative to its bearing upon the great apostle. Thus in preparing this lecture I had to keep one eye fixed upon the epistles, and one upon the Rabbinical literature. That is a position alike unnatural and unwholesome, and my lecture, like many other writings and books upon the Rabbinical religion, will bear upon it the traces of a squint.

Now the other lecture, with which my own largely but not absolutely coincides, would be called: "The Jewish background in the Epistles of St. Paul." I have imagined that you want something a little wider than that, or, at all events, that you want me to look at the matter from a slightly different point of view. I shall not minutely inquire how great that Jewish background may be. That also would involve a long discussion, more suited for a book than a lecture. I shall not ask, though the question is of grave importance, and has not yet been completely and satisfactorily answered, how far did Paul exaggerate his Judaism, more especially his Rabbinical Judaism, when it suited his purpose and his rhetoric to do so. Nor shall I inquire, though the subject is full of interest, how far Paul's Judaism was rather modelled on the Hellenistic Judaism of Philo than on the Rabbinic Judaism of Hillel, Gamaliel, or Akiba. I have to take the six central epistles as I find them, and without discussing the past influences which went to their production, to consider

their general relation to the Rabbinical religion of the time.

But alas! "The Rabbinical religion of the time" was my phrase, and clearly that is what we want to consider, but where are the sources, where is the material? Roughly speaking there are two kinds of literature available. The first kind consists of books, most or many of which were originally written in Hebrew, but which are now only preserved in Ethiopic, Greek, Latin, or other translations. These books comprise what is known as the Apocalyptic literature, of which Daniel in the Old Testament is the prototype, and the Revelation of St. John in the New Testament the most famous and widely known example. This apocalyptic literature, for reasons upon which I cannot now dwell, may only be used with great care and caution in dealing with the Rabbinical religion¹. Moreover, written not in unpointed and unfamiliar Hebrew, or in equally unpointed and still more unfamiliar Aramaic, and far smaller in compass, it is more known to and studied by Christian scholars, and its contents and teaching are more easily available. For this present lecture it may safely be neglected. The other kind of literature from which our knowledge of the Jewish religion may more rightly and properly be drawn is the Rabbinic literature, and consists of the many volumes of the Talmuds and the Midrashim. Now this literature is, nevertheless, not so hidden away as many people imagine. A considerable bulk of that very portion of it which has most direct bearing upon the Rabbinic religion as a whole, has been translated into German or French. And if certain distinguished scholars would make a more frequent, prolonged, and impartial use of these humble but useful "cribs," they would, I think, make fewer mistakes about the Rabbinical religion than, unfortunately, is now the case.

This, however, is but a hint, and perhaps a rude one, by

¹ Cp. Schechter, "Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology." *J.Q.R.*, vol. VI, pp. 407, 408 (July, 1894).

the way. The serious thing I have to point out is, that though the Talmudic and Midrashic literature is of vast extent, its dates are very dubious and confused. Much of it was not only written down, but even said or composed long after the death of St. Paul. Especially for the first century are the certain sources doubtful and few. Of Gamaliel, the reputed teacher of Paul, we know hardly anything, for his activity is merged in that of the "School of Hillel¹." Much or most of the Talmudic material belongs to the third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Christian era. Nevertheless, with caution and prudence, we may rightly use these late ill-dated sources as material for our subject, and for the following reasons.

The main elements of the Rabbinic religion underwent little change from 50 to 500 A. D. Above all, the central position of the Law was not shaken or altered. If the religion was "nomistic" in 50, it was assuredly no less nomistic in 500. The formative period was already over in the age of St. Paul. While, therefore, the strangest results would ensue from attempting to depict the Christianity of the first century out of the literature of the fifth and sixth, the same untoward results need not be feared from using Jewish material on similarly anachronistic lines. Christian scholars of to-day are wont to draw a sharp distinction between the Jewish religion before and after the Maccabean revolt. As the Psalms are now commonly ascribed to the post-Nehemian era, and as these sacred lyrics scarcely show the awful consequences of legalism, it is customary to say that all the immoralities and irreligiousness of the Rabbinic religion only began to bloom and flourish after the death of Judas the Maccabee. They were in full swing by 50 A. D., but I have never read in the work of any German theologian that between 50 and 500 there was any improvement whatever. And here I entirely agree with the theologians. The general effects of the Law, both for good

¹ For Gamaliel, the student may consult Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, Hamburger's *Real-Encyclopädie des Judentums*, Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, &c.

and evil, were (with one exception) the same in 500 as in 50; in both directions, indeed, if both directions there be, it is probably true to say that while those effects were deepened and hardened at the later date, their main character and tendency remained throughout these centuries the same. If I use the material by which some Christian scholars give so one-sided a picture of the law and its results, in order to present what I believe to be a truer and more historic, though a far less picturesque and harmonious statement, I cannot reasonably be called to book. What is usable on the one side is usable on the other.

Not that I want to give you an hour of apologetics. Heaven forbid. I shall freely recognize the limitations, the dangers, and the shortcomings of the Rabbinic religion, just as I shall freely recognize the greatness and the truth in the religious teaching of St. Paul. But where I differ from most speakers or writers on this subject, whether Jewish or Christian, is, that I apply these substantives to both sides of my subject; I recognize the greatness and the truth in the religious teaching of the Rabbis, and—if you will show an English toleration in listening to such words—the limitations, the dangers, and the shortcomings in the doctrine of St. Paul.

Let me here say, before closing more nearly with my subject, that Paul means for me to-day those six epistles, the genuineness of which is recognized by the vast majority of scholars¹. I will not discuss whether the remaining epistles (or the speeches in the Acts) are or are not genuine. Those who hold that they are do not the less admit the authenticity of the central six, and these six contain enough material, or rather suggest sufficient considerations and difficulties, for our purpose to-day.

In the writer, then, of those six epistles there are four separate strands to be distinguished. I will mention them in the wrong order. There is first of all the originality of

¹ 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philip-
pians.

the great man, the flash of genius which illumines and transfigures. But upon what did this genius work? We have, then, as the second strand, Christianity, by which I mean whatever came to Paul by revelation, tradition, or any other means, concerning the life and death and resurrection of Christ. Then there is that with which these two former strands intermingled. For, thirdly, we have Hellenism, an element in the Pauline Epistles, the extent of which is still under discussion. This Hellenism, whatever its amount, had a double source. On the one hand, there was the direct contact of St. Paul's mind with the Hellenism of his day. How far that went is debated, and perhaps unascertainable. On the other hand, there was the influence of Hellenism refracted through a Jewish medium. If there is one thing certain about the Epistle to the Romans, it is that its author had read and used the Wisdom of Solomon. Now that book is saturated with Hellenistic elements. This single fact gives rise to many reflections; it suggests possibilities which cannot be pursued here. I will only just say this: Philo, who was a contemporary of St. Paul, uses, as you all know, the letter of the Pentateuch for elaborate philosophical allegorizing. The real value of the Law lies for him not in what it says, but in what it implies; not in its literal meaning, but in its underlying spiritual significations. Philo nevertheless was a strictly observant Jew. But there were others who went beyond him, and whom he sharply censures. "There are some," he says, "who, when they have discovered the spiritual meaning of the law, think that they are free from the letter, and need no longer observe the ordinances." Hellenistic Judaism must have produced more than one type of mind, and there may have been Paulists before Paul. But into the mazes of this obscure and controversial subject I cannot enter¹. There is lack of knowledge as well as lack of time. Last of my four strands comes Judaism,

¹ Cp. M. Friedländer, *Zur Entstehung des Christenthums* (1894), and *Der vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus* (1898).

the Rabbinical Judaism with which we are immediately concerned.

Now I do not want to imply that only one-fourth of Paul is Jewish, or to be accounted for by Judaism. Such arithmetical calculations would obviously be absurd. But true it is that there is much in Paul which, while dealing with Judaism, is inexplicable by Judaism.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am only giving you my personal opinion, and all the great Christian theologians would say that I am hopelessly and childishly wrong. They would tell you that I am blinded by prejudice, and utterly unable to see or to appreciate the facts of the case. So all I would say is : keep an open mind, and—if the subject interests you and you know French and German—*read the cribs*. You will be horribly bored by them (their form is usually so repellent and their matter frequently so dull), but I think they will give you pause before accepting the judgments of the theologians on the relation of St. Paul to the Jewish religion.

As my own individual opinion, then, I repeat that there is much in Paul which, while dealing *with* Judaism, is inexplicable *by* Judaism.

Paul has been called by Wellhausen the great pathologist of Judaism¹. I venture to assert that this is just what he was not. The Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels *was* a critic and pathologist of Judaism. *His* criticisms are real : they are flesh and blood. There are, be it observed, parallels to and illustrations of them in the Rabbinical literature. Jesus put his finger upon real sore places : upon actual dangers, limitations, shortcomings. But the author of the Epistle to the Romans fights, for the most part, in the air. He sets up imaginary evils, and with superb eloquence and admirable rhetoric he brushes them away. His conception of the Law—for we are all agreed that everything turns on this—is unreal. The Jews must have understood the diatribes of Jesus well enough. Even if they thought them

¹ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (fifth edition), p. 430.

exaggerated—and in the form in which we have them perhaps they are so—they would yet have known well enough what he was driving at. The spurious Pharisees—of whom the Talmud speaks as well as Jesus—knew where the shoe pinched. But Paul's criticisms of the Law would have glided off a Jewish reader like water off a duck's back. They do not touch the spot.

Let us consider for a moment the real evils and defects which Jesus found and censured in the religion of his time. They were mainly three. There was, first, the putting of ritual in the place of morality. Secondly, there was self-righteousness or pride. Thirdly, there was a certain ill-directed intellectualism. With divers passages of Romans and Corinthians before your minds, it may seem to you a ludicrous statement if I venture to say that with none of these evils has Paul any prolonged or vital concern. Yet modern exegesis has established the fact that Paul's attack upon the Law *as* Law does not differentiate between its moral and its ceremonial elements. Nowhere in connexion with his elaborate argumentations about the inefficacy of the Law, does he make the charge that the Jews or the Pharisees were keen to obey its ritual but neglected its moral ordinances. The Law is the strength of sin, not in virtue of its containing a number of purely ritual enactments, but because it is law and all that law implies. Again, though Paul has a vast deal to say about boasting, that which he censures is in reality quite different to the practical and everyday evils which are so nobly castigated by Jesus. Many of his remarks about "boasting" are directed against the assumptions and actions of his Jewish-Christian antagonists, with the validity of which we have nothing to do; but where they are directed against Jews, they are far more theoretical than practical. They refer not to the evil characters of living men, boasters of flesh and blood, but to that theoretical boasting, which, according to the Pauline theory, must inevitably accompany any attempt to seek justification

by the works of the Law. It is the theological opposition between human merit and divine grace which is the dominating subject before the writer's mind, not an actual society of men. And so as regards intellectualism. There was a marked intellectual element in Rabbinic Judaism; it constituted both an excellence and a defect, a strength and a weakness. Jesus criticizes it from the point of view of its weakness, its real living weakness in relation to the lives of his contemporaries. But Paul's depreciation of wisdom and of knowledge springs from different roots and has different implications. He is partly alluding to strife within Christian limits, and partly to the old theoretical opposition between human achievement and divine grace.

Hence it is that, with one tremendous exception to prove my rule, the defects of Rabbinic Judaism are little illustrated by St. Paul. So to explain him, or stand to him in the relation of a dark foil, compared to which, like "star i' the darkest night," his brilliance shall shine more nobly, the commentators and theologians have had to make up a Rabbinic religion of their own, to point the moral and adorn their tale.

Every great religion has the defects of its qualities. It may be difficult to recognize them in our own religion, but at all events we can easily discern them in the religions of our neighbours. Such defects there clearly are both in Protestantism and Catholicism. Such defects, too, there were and are in Rabbinic Judaism. But while these evils explain and illustrate the sayings and sermons of Jesus, they only very partially explain and illustrate the Epistles of St. Paul. This daring statement I ought to make good. For lack of time I can do little but dogmatize: but, given the time, the task could be achieved.

Here I must put in two saving clauses. If my thesis were true, the puzzles and difficulties in the Epistles of St. Paul would certainly be increased. But it does not, therefore, follow that the thesis must necessarily be false. Truth is often complex and difficult. Secondly, I must not

be understood to mean that the Pauline Epistles as a whole cannot be illustrated and illuminated in a hundred ways by a reference to Rabbinic literature and religion. It is obvious that there are numerous elements in St. Paul's theology on which Rabbinic Judaism throws the greatest light. Paul's monotheism, his use of the Old Testament, his conception of the Messiah, his doctrine of angels and devils, the central place occupied in his system by eschatological considerations—all these and many other interesting points are illustrated by and stand in close connexion with parallel or analogous doctrines in the Rabbinic religion. Just because these are the more obvious and the safer points, I shall say nothing about them in the present lecture. I have to concentrate my attention and yours upon the Rabbinic doctrine of the Law as illustrating or *not* illustrating Paul's conception of it as the strength of sin.

It is possible that one or two of those here present may read some of the German and French translations from the Rabbinic literature, or they may read Weber's standard book on "Jewish Theology." May I suggest two cautions, both of which are germane to our present purpose? First of all to compare St. Paul with the Midrash would be unfair. St. Paul was a religious genius of the first order, who writes in the flush of a fresh enthusiasm. The Midrash is a confused jumble of sermons, parables, sayings, and anecdotes, without system or plan. There are indeed occasional flashes of genius, but most of it is of very second and third rate order of literary merit. You must (I imagine) compare the writings of the Rabbis not with the New Testament but with the Fathers.

My second caution is of far greater importance. It is also more difficult to realize and explain, and it deserves a whole lecture for its adequate justification and support. *St. Paul is far more systematic than the Rabbis.*

There are indeed contradictions and antinomies in the Pauline theology, but yet the main lines of argument are

firmly maintained. We have certain central theories carefully and insistently worked out. But with the Rabbis it is all very different. You can make a digest and system of their law, but a system of their theology you can only make with the utmost caution and with many reservations. It is in their theology that they let their exuberant fancy run wild. There all is incidental, casual and unsystematic. A deliberately playful and fanciful exegesis is pushed to the wildest extremes. Earnest and jest go cheek by jowl; wayward exaggeration and stern simplicity intermingle. Opinions on the one side are met by opinions on the other; the widest latitude is freely allowed. It is all familiar and among friends; there is no effort or restraint; you see the speakers at their worst and best. Here, then, is the obvious danger of such a book as Weber's, which cuts up the Rabbinic theology into ordered chapters and paragraphs, and makes a system out of confusion. Even if a book on those lines were written by a South Sea Islander who did not care a brass farthing what the Rabbinic religion was, whether for good or for evil, it would be dangerous. The subject is full of pitfalls. But when written by an Evangelical Christian who is constantly thinking of the Epistles of Paul, and is haunted by parallels and contrasts, it becomes more dangerous still. Indeed, after lately reading Weber's book three times through, I am astonished that such a book written on such lines by such a writer should be as good as it is. His very honesty enables us often to correct Weber by Weber. But even so it must be read with caution. For he who wants to make a system where system there is none, inevitably falls into error. And so it is with Weber. He presses some passages to mean more than they can bear; he minimizes others which qualify or contradict them. He neglects contexts; he takes jest for earnest, the elegant antitheses of a sermon for the ordered pronouncements of dogma. Paul is doubtless illustrated by Weber's book, but instead of a real religion full of

inconsistencies, yet palpitating with life, you have a one-sided and artificial system of dry theological opinions.

You would, I think, be in error if you suppose that I have laboured this point too lengthily. It is of more importance than at first sight it seems. Paul, according to my assertion, is more systematic than the Rabbis. Illustrate this and its consequences by the juridic elements in the epistles. If Paul is more systematic in his theology, he is also more juridic. Now you will always find in the textbooks that the juridic elements in the Pauline teaching are those which he owes to Judaism. Juridic, moreover, is a very convenient word. It is almost as good as legal. It means transitory, unmythic, hard, irreligious, immoral. That element, then, in Paul which is juridic, and therefore implies all these dreadful things, is the Jewish element—the element which he inherited from Gamaliel and the Pharisees. That which remains is Hellenic, Christian, original. But the truth is that Paul, in his dogmas about the Law, is far more juridic than the Rabbis.

Modern Christian scholars, with certain honourable exceptions, neglect the unjuridic elements of the Rabbinic religion, while the juridic elements they harden and exaggerate. It is more convenient and dramatic to do so, but the question is: Should even the history of religions be written in order to find picturesque facts and contrasts? The desire works unconsciously. Paul must not be responsible for any defects; they must merely be remnants of the old leaven. Do not imagine that I wish to exaggerate Paul's defects, or to minimize and cheapen his great contribution to the development of true religion. I only ask that we play the game fairly. Whether we criticize Paul or the Rabbis, let us always be sure that we are hitting above the belt. The caution is quite as much needed for Jewish as for Christian theologians. And yet one might have supposed it to be wholly superfluous. For surely we, both Jew and Christian, have reached a loftier platform, and breathe a purer air. For us, not only are there many

mansions in God's house, but there are many pathways by which to reach it. Paul could not understand that those rigid Rabbis were on the road, nor they that he was, and each must have been vastly astonished to meet the other. But for us such misunderstandings and astonishments have passed away.

In making the Law the pivot of my remarks to-day, I shall not be unfair either to the Rabbis or to Paul. For, as Weber rightly sees and affirms, the Law is the centre of the Jewish religion; all radiates out from the Law, and from it all depends. And, in another fashion and for different reasons, you can make the Law a centre for the treatment of the Pauline religion likewise. It is in opposition and antagonism to the Law that the apostle reaches the fundamental propositions of his theology. God and Christ, the divine scheme of salvation, human morality, past and present, are all related to the Law, so that in an inverted sort of way the Law may be said to be as important in Paul's system of religion as in the Judaism of the Rabbis.

What would the Epistle to the Romans be without the Law? Though the Law "came in between," its importance is tremendous. We have to remember the fragmentary shortness of human history in the Pauline conception of it. There is the period between Adam and Abraham about which the facts are few, there is the period from Abraham to Moses, and there is the period from Moses to Christ. *With Christ the end of this world was near at hand.* Though the Law only came with Moses, the third period of human history was more actual and living than either the second or the first.

What, then, was the Rabbinic conception of the Law, and of Israel's relation to God as conditioned by the Law, which we may assume to have been common and current in the days of Paul? For simplicity's sake I will here assume that the Hebrew word *Torah* is equivalent to the Pentateuchal Code, though in reality the *Torah* had a wider

connotation and a more far-reaching significance. But for our present purpose the equivalence will do no harm. Let us also remember and press the words: the *Rabbinic* conception of the Law. How far *Hellenistic* Judaism deviated from that conception, and how far Paul before his conversion was a *Hellenistic* Jew, we are not to inquire.

God, then, in his perfect wisdom and goodness, has given the Law to Israel for the divine glory and for Israel's benefit. It is the good God who has given it, the God who is not only just but also merciful, the God whose own glory is closely connected with the fortunes of Israel. In the gift there was no deception and no *arrière-pensée* or mental reserve. God did not say one thing and mean another. When he said that the Law should be Israel's wisdom, Israel's honour, and Israel's good, he meant what he said. Nor did he say it with the unexpressed idea at the back of his mind, "Yes, the Law is all this if you obey it, but you never can obey it, and you are not meant to obey it." He gave it in sincerity and not in craft. The Law is the will of God, the expression of his wisdom. Partly by those powers of his which are themselves God-given, and partly by the special aid of God, man, if he try his best, can do the good God's will. It is true that God has made him frail; it is true that God has created within him—why we do not entirely know—two impulses, one towards good and another towards evil, and it is true that man never passes through the years of his pilgrimage upon earth without yielding from time to time to the baser impulse, and breaking some of the commands of the good God's law. But God is gracious and forgiving, and though he punishes as well as rewards, yet there is no need for despair. Perhaps the struggle to avoid sin, and to do and to be good, was divinely intended in order to enable Israel the more worthily to live the second life, the life after death, which, in his infinite goodness and mercy, God has prepared for them. The commands of the Law are necessarily good and wise, for they are given by and are the direct outcome

of infinite wisdom and goodness. We ourselves can see the wisdom and the goodness of many of these laws. Some we may regard as greater than others, and God himself has told us of those on which he lays the greatest stress. But all the laws are his, and it is not for us to cavil where we, in our limited wisdom, are, likely enough, unable to understand. For the Laws are the will of God, our Father in Heaven, and to study and to accomplish that will, so clearly and so graciously revealed to us, is at once our holiest duty and our supremest joy.

That in barest outline is the Rabbinic conception of the Law. *That* was the conception of it in the days of Paul; *that*, I beg you to observe, is the conception held by many a simple Jewish believer at the present hour. It is perhaps in many ways a too easy and childish conception of religion, but if it is accurate, if, that is to say, my picture is correct, you can already realize how irrelevant to the ordinary Jew Paul's attack upon the Law must seem. And if Paul seems irrelevant, far more irrelevant, yes and far more absurd, seem those elaborate bogies of the Law decked out in mock horrors by the hands of Christian theologians.

The outline of the Rabbinic conception must now be filled up. The Law was given for Israel's benefit. In what sense is this word "benefit" used? In every conceivable sense, might be the answer. The different senses jostle upon each other in the Rabbinical literature, and certainly they are not all in perfect consistency with each other. The first and greatest of them undoubtedly is that through the Law Israel obtains eternal life. The life to come is the "reward" of a faithful observance of the Law upon earth. But faithful observance is far from meaning complete observance, and we may even go so far as to say that the merits and efficacy of the Law will in one way or another secure the life to come to almost every Israelite. I put this benefit first, because, though the eschatological motive and hope are less prominent in the rabbinical than in the apocalyptic literature, yet in some

respects they dominate and transfigure it almost as strongly and vividly as they transfigure and dominate the epistles of St. Paul. But what are the Law's benefits on earth? What are its present rewards?

Oh, this terrible bogey of reward! German theologians are wont to regard *Lohnsucht* as the main motive of the Jewish religion. *Lohnsucht*, the search, the lust for reward. A more cruel libel it would be impossible to imagine. Because Paul declares that destruction will be the lot of those who reject Christ, and eternal bliss the lot of those who accept in glad faith the sacrifice of his death, is *Lohnsucht* the motive of the believer? Because you believe that there is a difference made after death between the believer and the infidel, or between the saint and the sinner, does that make your religion mercenary and servile? Nay, even if you believe that in the last resort God has so ordered the world of earth that honesty is the best policy—and for the Jews this has been very hard to believe even from Paul's days to our own—do you necessarily serve God for hope of pay? Must true and pure religion be attended with every kind of misery both here and hereafter?

Over and over again do the Jewish teachers speak of the rewards of the Law, but frequently do they tell their disciples that the motive for observance must not lie in the desire to obtain them. Jewish scholars have pointed this out time after time, but never a whit do the theologians heed. "For its own sake" the Law must be observed; the true Israelite should delight in the commandments themselves more than in their rewards¹. And what funny rewards some of them are. Though the Jewish teachers strongly held the view that the earth is good, and that God has formed man to be happy upon it, to rejoice in his portion, they did not shut their eyes to the actual lot of

¹ Cp. Schechter, "Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology," *J.Q.R.*, vol. VI, p. 642 (July, 1894), and the "Doctrine of Divine Retribution in the Rabbinical Literature," *J.Q.R.*, vol. III, October, 1890, p. 49.

themselves and their contemporaries. Thus one of the greatest rewards of the Law are the sufferings received in its service. "Beloved are sufferings, for through sufferings Israel obtained three great gifts—the Law, the land of Israel, and the life to come¹." Some of the supremest benefits of the Law are spiritual. By the Law Israel becomes a wise and holy nation, an exemplar to the world. By the Law and through the Law Israel finds happiness. But what sort of happiness? Surely one that cannot fairly be called mercenary. It is "the happiness of the commandments" to use the common Jewish phrase, the joy in doing God's will, the rapture in fulfilling the ordinances of God². Through the Law the Israelite draws near to God; he enters into communion with him. It is then that he feels the *Schechinah*—the presence of God—to be near him and about him³.

How much we read in the theologians of the Law being external. It is a task-master ordering from without; it says "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" but it supplies no inward force with which to obey these cut and dry commands, these cold, severe, and terrorizing ordinances. It was, indeed, given by God, but by a God distant, gloomy, and rigid, a Lawgiver and a Judge, not a Father and a Friend. I wonder if there is the smallest chance that you, unlike the theologians, will believe me when I say that all this business of the severe Judge and the stern Lawgiver is a figment and a bugbear? God to the Rabbis is certainly both Lawgiver and Judge, and even the Pauline Christian recognizes that there is such a thing as justice and judg-

¹ Cp. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, (2nd ed.), p. 322. Schechter, "Doctrine of Divine Retribution in the Rabbinical Literature," *J.Q.R.*, vol. III (October, 1890), pp. 45-49.

² Cp. *Bab. Talmud*, *Sabbath*, 30 b; *Pesachim*, 17 a (Wuenschel, *Die haggadischen Bestandtheile des babylonischen Talmuds*, I, pp. 126, 241. But the passage from *Sabbath* 30 b is more fully translated in L. Goldschmidt's new translation (not yet completed) of the *Babylonian Talmud*, vol. I, p. 387.

³ Cp. Weber, pp. 30, 31.

ment both in this world and in the next. But how can you call that Lawgiver stern and cruel who gives the laws for the benefit of his creatures, and who is ceaseless in his love for them, who pities them in their sorrows, and on the smallest pretext of repentance hastens to forgive them their sins? Yet that is the Rabbinic conception of God, and endless passages of the Rabbinic literature are full of nothing but proofs of it¹. How can you call that Law external, which is believed to be the will of God and, like God himself, perfectly wise and perfectly good? It is no more external than the Moral Law to the philosopher. Even Dr. Cone, usually so fair and honest, seems to think that a lawgiver and judge cannot also be gracious and loving. Holtzmann, in his admirable exposition of Paul's theology, feels bound to speak of a "servile service under the yoke of the Law²." "Servile service!" Wherein lies the servility of serving God? It seems to me almost an insult to common sense that I should have to show that such a service, willingly offered, is not slavery but freedom. But because Paul says so, therefore it must be so. Though the entire Rabbinic literature is one huge denial, though the hypotheses on which Rabbinic Judaism rests,—that God is infinitely good, that he loves Israel, that he has given his Law to Israel out of love; that Israel, believing in this doctrine about God, finds in the service of God its greatest privilege; that the Law was originally freely offered and freely accepted, and that this free offer and free acceptance is continued from generation to generation—though all these hypotheses are absolutely inconsistent with the supposed servility, though there are thousands of Pharisaic Jews to this day who live under the Law and find in it no servitude—all this counts for nothing. One would have thought that history would

¹ Even Weber gives some hints of this : cp. pp. 51, 52, 57-9, 61. But the passages he quotes are mere drops from the ocean.

² Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie*, II, p. 137. Orello Cone, "Paul : the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher" (1898), p. 348.

show how cautious we ought to be in accepting for literal truth what the man who has gone over to another faith, or experienced a great religious convulsion, says about the religion he has rejected or his own spiritual condition before his conversion, but, where Judaism is concerned, history has no voice or lesson for the Pauline theologians.

The Law to the Rabbi holds in many respects the same place as Jesus Christ to the Christian believer. Let me take the "servile service" as an illustration. It is freedom according to the Rabbinic teaching which is secured by the Law. Playing upon the word *Charuth* (graven) in the sentence, "And the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables," a Rabbi observes: "Read not *Charuth*, but *Cheruth* (the Hebrew word for freedom), for none is free but he who is occupied in the learning of Thorah." Or again: "Every one who busies himself in the Thorah, he is a free man." Or again: "Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is a free man. And when is a land in this happy case? When its king busies himself in the Law, for there is no free man but he who occupies himself with the Law." And again: "When law entered into the world freedom came with it¹."

In any great religion the question is, Are you going to expound and assess it by its ideals and successes or by its defects and its failures? Are you going to judge it by its sinners or its saints? But no such questions are asked about Rabbinic Judaism when it is used to illustrate St. Paul. According to Canon Gore, of whom I shall have more to say, it seems to have been one mass of "moral hollowness and rottenness, of pride, stagnation, conventionalism and hypocrisy." That is a pretty good list, especially when thrown in by the way, and so far as I

¹ Cp. *Aboth de R. Nathan*, II, p. 10 (ed. Schechter); *Bemidbar Rabba*, X, Wuensche's translation, p. 226; *ibid.* XVI, Wuensche, p. 426; *Shemot Rabba*, XLI; Wuensche, pp. 291, 343; *Beresbit Rabba*, LIII; Wuensche, p. 253; *Abot*, VI, 2 (ed. Taylor), &c.

can make out, *not* the result of patient and laborious perusal of the original authorities. Rabbinic Judaism has no ideals of excellence; the darkness which is to throw Jesus and Paul into higher light must clearly be unrelieved. But would it not be fairer to deal with Rabbinic Judaism as you would deal with Catholicism or Calvinism? In other words, not to rely exclusively on the works of converts and enemies for your judgment upon these great religions and on the men who lived under their sway, but while not neglecting such authorities, to study in the first instance their own literatures, and to make *these* your main sources and your chief tests? What are the ideals? What are the defects of those ideals? How far did the actual men and women live up to the ideals? How far did they fall victims to the defects? Are you seriously able to believe that Rabbinic Judaism could send martyrs to the sword and the stake by hundreds and thousands, and yet be one mass of "pride, stagnation, conventionalism, hypocrisy, moral hollowness and rottenness"? Have the Jews never had any religious or moral virtues? If so, whence did they obtain them except from the Law? Or did some wonderful change for the better come over them after the days of Paul? And if so, how did it come except by the Law? Or was it the spectacle of Christian toleration and Christian love?

The Law, then, as the wise and broadminded Dr. Taylor says, is "a charter of freedom¹." That is the ideal. But can the Law be fulfilled? And what does the attempt at its fulfilment involve? I have no doubt that you are familiar with the two great, and to my mind contradictory, charges which are commonly brought against the Law. The first is that the Law as a whole is incapable of fulfilment. Failure provokes despair. The very multiplicity of its enactments—here the ritual side is mainly thought of—is an intolerable burden. There are laws to left of

¹ Taylor, C., "Sayings of the Jewish Fathers" (i.e. Abot). 2nd ed. Note on III, 8, p. 46.

you, laws to right of you, laws in front of you, thundering forth their orders and threats. Perpetual is your anxiety lest even inadvertently you may have transgressed or have omitted to fulfil. The second charge is that the Law causes pride. You are proud of its mere possession, and an easy outward conformity can well go together with "moral hollowness and rottenness" within. Some writers emphasize the first charge; others the second. Thus Weber takes the line that the life of Judaism was a constant terror, Canon Gore insists mainly on the self-righteousness and the pride. The really ingenious thing to do is to ride on both stools at once, like Holtzmann who bravely accuses the Pharisees of *Selbstzufriedenheit* on the one hand and of *Friedlosigkeit des Gewissens* on the other.

It may be well to ask how far Paul himself is responsible for these charges and in what form. A careful reading will show, as I have already pointed out, how very different his position towards the Law is from that of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. The first charge is Pauline, but with a difference. The famous seventh chapter of the Romans has to do with moral and not with ceremonial ordinances. The point is that the Law, which orders from without and supplies and stimulates the consciousness of sin, provides no inward force with which man can resist and quell his sinful lusts and desires, and thus do the right or avoid the wrong. The dead letter is contrasted with the life-giving spirit. This spirit can only come to the believer who accepts in loving faith the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ. The conception of the Law as a burden is scarcely Pauline. He is sometimes disposed to regard its ceremonial enactments as belonging to an elementary stage of religion which has passed away; the Israelite under the Law is in a state of bondage, and the Christian who allows himself to be bothered and harassed by times and seasons and days is foolishly unappreciative of the spiritual freedom which Christ has given him. But the notion that the mere weight and number of the ceremonial

enactments constitute a grievous trouble and a baneful burden can hardly be illustrated from the six genuine epistles. Paul's objections to the Law are always relative to his own theoretical or theological system; they are evolved from his own consciousness. The second charge—that of self-righteousness and pride—is also only partly illustrated by Paul. Here, however, the apostle is far nearer to reality. For the Jew, humble towards God, was guilty of pride towards the gentile. Particularism was the great weakness and defect of the Rabbinic religion, though it was accompanied by qualities too commonly overlooked or denied in the customary descriptions of Judaism. But the charge of easy, outward conformity and self-righteousness is not Paul's. To him the Law is almost always a whole. It is not from him that we get the picture of the proud Pharisee who does the light things of the Law and neglects or transgresses the essentials. For that you must go to the Gospels and—don't believe me if it sounds too queer—to the Rabbinic literature itself¹.

But, once more, can the Law be fulfilled? Is man expected to fulfil it? The Rabbinic reply is simple. It does not perhaps go deep enough to satisfy a consistent theorist; it is not without its difficulties if you choose to dig for them; but it is practical, it works. It is the reply according to which ordinary life seems to be carried on.

God has given man capacities in virtue of which he can, to a considerable extent, fulfil the Law. There are good men, even saints. That is a fact; it was a fact in the days of Paul, and it remained a fact in all the generations which succeeded him. As God has given man the power to fulfil the Law, he is expected to fulfil it. God punishes failure, he rewards success. But God has so constituted man that he not only is possessed of powers—God-given powers—by which he can fulfil the Law, but he also contains an impulse, an inclination, a desire, leading him to

¹ Cp. *Babylonian Talmud, Sota*, 22 b. Wuensche, *Die haggadischen Bestandtheile, etc.*, II, 1, pp. 297, 298.

transgress and disobey it. This is the famous *Yetzer Ha-Ra*, corresponding to Paul's "Law of sin which is in the members." But God has taken care—so far at least as Israel is concerned—that the *Yetzer Ha-Ra* shall win no necessary or inevitable triumph. He helps the good in their struggle against evil. He sustains them by his spirit and his presence, and by the promise of resurrection and the life to come. And if from time to time men fail and lapse and sin—for the saints are few—even then God does not leave or forsake them. He provides means by which their sin is forgiven, and better still, means by which they themselves are led back to rectitude and goodness. For the best gift of God is repentance.

This abstract of the Rabbinic doctrine may perhaps suffice to show that the Pauline opposition of works and faith, and of merit and grace, is inapplicable to the Rabbinic religion. Rabbinic Judaism is an unsystematic mixture of works and of faith, of grace and of merit. You will find passages about faith which sing its praises quite in the Pauline manner, but no Rabbinic Jew reading these passages would either find anything odd in them or anything inconsistent with the predominating doctrine that "by his works shall a man be judged." Man cannot neglect for long the many-sided demands of his own nature. Cone admirably shows how works crop up again and again even in Paul, and so—only far more naturally and unsurprisingly—is it with faith and the Rabbis. "Through the reward of faith," as it says in the *Mechilta*, "the Holy Spirit rested upon Israel, and they sang the song by the waters of the Red Sea. Abraham our father only inherited this world and the world to come by the merit of faith. Every one who accepts even one command by faith is worthy that the Holy Spirit should rest upon him¹." Of course, Weber tries to belittle the Jewish conception of faith by calling it a *Leistung* (a work, an action), but, call it by what name you will, it means

¹ *Mechilta*, 33 b. Cp. Weber, pp. 304, 308.

just simply an absolute trust in the goodness and wisdom of God. Faith and trust are used interchangeably, as where it says in the Midrash that whoever trusts in God is worthy to become like him, or that Joseph only once lost his trust in God (and the lack of faith brought him two more years in prison), when he besought the chief butler to remember him, and did not think that God alone was adequate for his deliverance¹.

But does man perform the Law by his own merit and covet his reward from God by right and not by grace? Yes and no. It is a doleful answer, but if you limit me to three words, no other can truthfully be given. Let me use Paul as a parallel. According to his doctrine there can be no question of merit between God and man. The parties are not equal and independent. Unless and until you believe in the atoning efficacy of Christ's death upon the cross, you can neither be good by fulfilling the Law, nor, even if you did fulfil it, would you be good. For the very fact of having fulfilled it in the flesh and by your own will would rob the fulfilment of all ethical and religious value. But after the act of faith has been accomplished, and the death of Christ has wrought in you its mysterious grace and power, then, though theoretically you should sin no more, yet practically the old leaven still works. There are differences between believer and believer, and while the one may be a saint, the other may be something very closely resembling a sinner. On the results of man's action after the acceptance of Christianity God judges, and it would seem that there may even be Christians for whom destruction and not eternal bliss will be in store. Now the Law is the Jewish Christ. It was given in pure grace, and it is only through the Law that man can work his way to heaven. God has bestowed the Law upon Israel for Israel to win its spurs. You cannot therefore speak of man's independence. The laws constitute

¹ *Bereshit Rabba*, Wuensche's translation, p. 435; *Debarim Rabba*, V, Wuensche's translation, p. 69.

the rungs of the ladder which God has planted for man to climb. But because God loves Israel, and because his own glory is involved in the praise which Israel renders him, therefore he says, "Earn what you can by your own effort and by my help, and what is then lacking I will supply."

You will find a great deal in Weber about the important conception of *Zechut* or Merit. But it must be read and accepted with the utmost caution. It is throughout written with the desire and design of enlarging the contrast between Rabbinic merit and Pauline grace. I cannot, unfortunately, deal with the subject in detail, for it would need a lecture to itself. But without detail the subject cannot satisfactorily be explained. The first point to remember is that there is no equality of relation. That is Weber's capital error. If man can earn merit, he can only do so because God has given him the Law by which to earn it. The father is glad when the child executes his will. But the rewards which the father gives are not a bargain. Nor *as towards the father* is there any place or opportunity for pride. The true and genuine Rabbinic attitude is shown in the following prayer, which every orthodox Jew still repeats day by day: "Sovereign of all worlds! not because of our righteous acts do we lay our supplications before thee, but because of thine abundant mercies. What are we? what is our life? what is our piety? what our righteousness? what our helpfulness? what our strength? What can we say before thee, O Lord our God and the God of our fathers? Are not all the mighty men as nought before thee, the men of renown as though they had not been, the wise as if without knowledge, and the men of understanding as if without discernment?¹" There does not seem much pride or insistence upon merit in *that* prayer! There are many passages about divine grace in the Rabbinical

¹ *Authorized Daily Prayer Book of the "German and Polish" Congregations of the British Empire*, ed. Singer (Eyre and Spottiswoode), p. 7. The prayer is referred to in *Bab. Talmud, Yoma*, 87 b. The date of the prayer is at latest the second century A.D.

literature, and even honest Weber is bound to quote a few of them. He naturally wants to weaken them if he can. He does not appreciate their almost childish simplicity. Thus the Midrash makes one of its untranslatable grammatical jokes upon a word in Zechariah (ix. 9), and observes: "Even if there are no good works in your hands, God will redeem you for his own sake." Upon which Weber solemnly remarks that "Grace is merely *faute de mieux*; God first asks, 'Is there merit?'"¹ But the Midrash draws no such fine distinctions. It is simple and unsystematic. Where there is no "law," God will act by "grace," as indeed he did with all the generations between the creation and the redemption from Egypt, for they had no good works by which they could "live." But with the revelation of Sinai, God gave to Israel the merit of the Law,—the privilege of becoming worthy through the fulfilment of its commands. This high privilege was in itself an act of grace, and can never produce a sense of pride and independence against God. There is no virtue on which the Talmud lays greater stress than humility; none against which it speaks more vehemently than pride. God himself is said to be humble, and even for humility man can find in God his pattern and example. Though God may choose to reward man for his good deeds, and to let his lot, both here and hereafter, depend partly upon himself, that does not involve pride, and the Rabbi would agree with the poet that "merit lives from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to thee." "He in whom is the spirit of pride," say the Rabbis, "is as bad as an idolater." "Man may learn of God, for God let his *Shechinah* rest upon Sinai and not upon the higher mountains, and he avoided the grander trees but let his *Shechinah* rest upon the thorn-bush." "The humble are regarded by Scripture as if they had offered all the sacrifices of the Law"². Like to these

¹ Weber, p. 304.

² Sota, 4 b, 5 a, 5 b; Wuensche, *Die haggadischen Bestandtheile*, II, 1, pp. 243, 245, 247.

are the constant utterances of the Rabbis about humility and pride. Are they the sayings of men who thought much of their own achievements?

The Rabbis were far from assigning too low a position to the Evil Impulse—the *Yetzer Ha-Ra*. Though it is possible, by earnest effort, by prayer, and by the help of God, to triumph over the incitations and temptations of evil, the task is difficult. It needs constant watchfulness; man must be ever on the alert to quell the suggestions of sin as they arise. On the whole, Weber gives a fair account of the *Yetzer Ha-Ra* in the Talmudic literature; his main fault seems to be that he too much ignores the help from God which man receives according to the Rabbinic theory, and that he describes the general Rabbinic attitude of mind in colours too dark and gloomy. The seventh chapter of the Romans is too constantly before his mind. The rule of the Law and the help of the Spirit do not exclude one another. "Whatever the righteous do," it says in *Tanchuma*, "they do through the Holy Spirit." Nor is it true to say that God's help is only given to exceptional piety. The general doctrine is accurately expressed in the saying: "He who wants to be pure is helped to be pure; for him who wants to pollute himself the door is opened¹." If the help of God were not believed in, of what use and point would be those frequent prayers in the liturgy for guidance and help: "O bring us not into the power of sin or of temptation; let not the *Yetzer Ha-Ra* have sway over us; make us cling to the good *Yetzer* and to good deeds; subdue our *Yetzer* so that it may be made subservient unto thee²." Whatever the mysterious process may be by which, as most religious persons believe, God helps us on towards goodness—whether you call it the gift of his Spirit or what not—the Rabbis believed in it, and they were strengthened and comforted by the belief. Why Paul does not refer to this

¹ *Yoma*, 38b fin., 39a; Wuensche, *Die haggadischen Bestandtheile*, I, pp. 367, 368.

² *Authorized Prayer Book*, p. 7.

current dogma of his time is one of the many puzzles which his writings suggest.

The question of fear must, however, be looked into a little more closely. I do not wish to ignore the defects of a nomistic religion. There is a danger lest rectitude be cut up into fragments, and the unity of virtue be lost in a multiplicity of separate enactments. It would not seem unlikely that the breezy simplicity of a noble character might soon be injured or never be achieved. Life and character must not be carved up into atoms. The late Master of Balliol has said: "Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that scruples about lesser matters almost always involve some dereliction of duty in greater and more obvious ones. A tender conscience is a conscience unequal to the struggles of life. At first sight it seems as if, when lesser duties were cared for, the greater would take care of themselves. But this is not the lesson which experience teaches. In our moral as in our physical nature, we are finite beings, capable of only a certain degree of tension, ever liable to suffer disorder and derangement, to be over-exercised in one part and weakened in another. No one can fix his mind intently on a trifling scruple, or become absorbed in an eccentric fancy, without finding the great principles of truth and justice insensibly depart from him. He has been looking through a microscope at life, and cannot take in its general scope. The moral proportions of things are lost to him; the question of a new moon or a Sabbath has taken the place of diligence or of honesty." Doubtless into some of these evils and pitfalls Rabbinic Jews occasionally fell.

It is commonly said that the Law compelled a certain externality in the relations between God and man. The Jew had the feeling that there were a heap of little things which he must do, and a heap of little things which he must avoid doing, in order to win God's approval. And God judges by a system of book-keeping. Your good deeds are added up on the one side, your bad deeds upon

the other. Then the balance is struck by subtracting the one from the other. Hence an anxious scrupulosity, a sense of burden, of obligation unfulfilled, a constant and harrowing uncertainty. "The difference," says Prof. Sanday, "between the man whose rule is one of faith and the man subject to law is that while for the latter there are definite and often minute regulations he must follow, for the former the only laws are great and broad principles." Nothing is so destructive to character as constantly to be thinking whether this is right or that is wrong, whether here you have transgressed or there you have obeyed.

I admit these dangers, though let me again point out that they hardly consort with that "self-satisfaction" which Prof. Sanday, without any reference to or support from the original authorities, tells us "was ingrained in the Pharisaic temper," because "the performance of Pharisaic righteousness was too well within the compass of an average will¹." I admit the dangers and the defects. Weber has rightly called attention to them, and the passages which he quotes in support are worthy of the utmost consideration². But you will not gain a true idea of the Rabbinic religion and of its attitude towards the Law without bearing in mind another side to the picture. That side is not wholly ignored by Weber, but he does not set it in its proper light. Moreover, it is exceedingly difficult for those who have not lived under the Law (I speak as one of them) to appreciate the Rabbinic point of view.

First of all one has again and again to repeat that the Law was regarded as a privilege and a joy. "The more the merrier" is the Rabbinic attitude towards the number of legal enactments. Because God loved Israel, therefore he gave them so many commands. From a lower point of view these commands were the means by which the Jew could earn reward—the reward of the future life. From the higher point of view they were the ornaments of Israel,

¹ Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 183, 387.

² Weber, pp. 278-288.

his crown of glory, his links of union and communion with the God who gave them. And remember that the Rabbis who say these things, so simply, unaffectedly, and devoutly, are no priestly class. They were the sons of the people; many of them artisans and craftsmen; in close touch with their contemporaries, sharing with them their sorrows and their joys. Weber and others lay stress on a verbal metaphor. The Rabbis speak of the yoke of the Law. But the yoke of the Law is used in conscious opposition to the yoke of worldly care or the yoke of political subjection. You might as well argue that Paul felt his relation to Christ to be burdensome because he speaks of himself as Christ's bondman. As we have already seen, the yoke of the Law is the highest and the fairest freedom.

Again, the commandments of the Law were a sanctification of life. From the Rabbinic point of view it was a grand thing that even the ordinary actions of every day—eating and drinking and sowing and ploughing—were hallowed by commands¹. All could be done to the glory of God; and the thought of him, and of his love for Israel, could accompany the pious Israelite at every step. For Israel is God's beloved, his bride, and when the commands of the Law are being fulfilled by Israel, then the divine presence rests upon them. The enactments of the Law are the adornments in which the bride enters within the presence of her Lover². It is very difficult for us to realize all this, but many things in other people's religions are difficult to realize, yet none the less are they real. The sanctification of every-day life through the Law has been of immense service to the Jews. Think what a sordid life theirs has been. But the Law has illumined it with a radiant light. The theologians talk of the burden of the Sabbath. Why this Sabbath has been the poetry of many a forcedly

¹ Cp. *Bemidbar Rabba*, X, Wuensche's translation, p. 201; *Canticles Rabba*, on V, 16, Wuensche's translation, p. 149.

² Cp. *Canticles Rabba* on I, 15, Wuensche, p. 49; *ibid.* on IV, 1, Wuensche, p. 101; *ibid.* on VII, 7, Wuensche, p. 171.

prosaic life¹. The Sabbath a burden—the bride, the fairy! Heine's *Prinzessin Sabbat* should give the theologians pause.

Thirdly, one has to remember that somehow or other there was a good dose of common sense in these old Rabbis which often shows itself in various ways. They were well aware that in God's eyes as well as in man's there must be an obvious difference between the value of command and command. It is true that all must be obeyed and none must be cavilled at, but it is also true that the moral laws culminating in the famous "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" were regarded as far outweighing the importance of all the others. The Talmudic ethics are lofty and delicate. Again, even Weber can show you that the Rabbis were well able to distinguish between outward act and inward thought, between intention and deed. While they recognize that "'tis one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall," yet from a different point of view they condemn the impure thought as worse than the impure deed, while the intention to do right, though hindered by *force majeure*, counts equally with performance. Nor do they really hold that God judges by one hard and mechanical method and by no other. Especially does this come out in their stories about repentant sinners. Not infrequent is the saying "Many obtain the kingdom of heaven in an hour, while many require a lifetime."

But what, it may be asked, about those pages and passages in Weber, wherein he shows that the life of the pious Jew was passed in one long round of terror, in a perpetual dread of the punishments which might befall him upon earth and of the punishments which might befall him after death²? Did not the scrupulosity which the Law engendered also engender fear, the restless fear of a conscience that was never at ease, never assured that it was at peace and reconciled with God?

¹ Cp. Schechter, "The Law and Recent Criticism," *J. Q. R.*, vol. III, July, 1891, pp. 754-766.

² Weber, pp. 248-250, 256-259, 281, 284, 288, 335-337.

The true reply would, I think, be that Weber's conclusions are obtained partly by concentrating attention upon certain passages and wholly neglecting others, partly by exaggerating or misinterpreting the import of those passages. The Rabbinic literature contains almost every conceivable variety of opinion. One has to ask: what is the *usual* opinion, what is the prevailing or predominating note? Jewish apologists on their side make the same kind of mistake that Weber makes on his. For instance, you can collect a number of sayings by which to prove that the Rabbinical literature teaches toleration and universalism. These sayings have been collected in various elegant extracts, and they have done duty in many a sermon and controversy. But the truth is that the Rabbis were no more tolerant than Athanasius, and they peopled Gehenna with their enemies as thickly as ever Dante peopled Inferno with his.

The predominant note of the Rabbinical literature, so far as its relation to God is concerned, is one not of fear but of joy, not of doubt but of faith. The greater danger lay in the opposite direction, and it is against this danger that the Rabbis had more often to preach.

There is, indeed, a whole crop of superstitions to be gathered from the Rabbinic literature, but Weber makes too much of it. The Talmud and the Midrash are a repertory of religion and law, but also of folklore and superstition. The world to the ordinary Jew was as full of demons and genii and fairies and spirits as it was to the ordinary Christian. The Jews, who are an extremely assimilative people, picked up superstitions wherever they went. But in reality they sit as loosely to Judaism as to Christianity. To say, as Weber does, that the Jew "believed himself to be surrounded on all sides by evil, by death and by the power of demons," so that "constant fear was his portion," is nothing less than a libel. Again I say, read the cribs: most of Weber's quotations come from books which Wuensche, himself a Christian scholar, but

of a very different stamp, has translated. Those who choose to read the 5000 pages of Wuensche's translations will, I believe, come to a very different conclusion from Weber. They will perhaps rather be inclined to think that the Jews were somewhat too confident that they would inherit the glories of "the world to come."

Weber quotes passages to show that the Jews feared to die. For a nation of martyrs this is pretty strong to begin with. But let us look at the matter a little more closely.

The Rabbis—let me use this opportunity to make the observation—were burdened by the sheer mass and authority of the Old Testament. Alas, through the prejudiced and foolish attitude which they took up towards all other literatures, and especially towards the wisdom of the Greeks, the Bible was their only book. And it was all true, all good, all divine. To be sure, it could be interpreted, and they did interpret it with a vengeance. On the whole they read into it a good deal of fine and wholesome religion. But some of its lower and impurer elements could not be explained away. Among these was the prevailing doctrine that calamity implied iniquity, and that death was the punishment of sin. As we have seen, the doctrine was frequently softened and changed. Calamity or suffering was often regarded as a blessing in disguise. It was a trial, a discipline, a purification, an earthly indication *per contrariam* of heavenly beatitude. But the evil side of the doctrine was not entirely overcome. Thus we are told that such and such sins are visited by famine, or such and such by pestilence and so on. The false and horrible doctrine is formulated that "for three" (purely ritual) "transgressions women die in childbirth," and I am ashamed to say that this atrocious rubbish defames and pollutes the Jewish liturgy to the present day¹. Now it is implied in Genesis that death was the punishment of Adam's sin; in the Psalms the prayer for length of days is constantly offered up, and in the

¹ *Authorized Prayer Book*, p. 121.

Pentateuch long life is often declared to be a reward of right doing. Under these circumstances the Rabbis, though, by a belief in a future life, their religious centre of gravity had been entirely changed, could not wholly shake off the burden of the doctrine that in some way or other death was a punishment. But for them the doctrine was far more theoretical than practical, and their conviction that the death of the righteous or the repentant would be ultimately followed up by the beatitude of the world to come, could not but make an immense difference in their real genuine attitude towards earthly life and its inevitable close.

True, then, it is that the angel of death is often spoken of as an enemy, but it is also true that in other passages death is spoken of as "very good" because it leads from trouble to rest or from sorrows to joy. The same Rabbis who invented the pretty legend of the reluctance which Moses showed to quit life before he had entered Palestine, and of his long dialogues with God and with the angel of death, also invented the conception of the *Neshikah*, the kiss by which the souls of the righteous are removed from their bodies. Why, in Weber's opinion, did the Jews fear death? Because they were afraid, so runs the answer, of the judgment which might befall them. Their anxiety throughout life as to whether they had fulfilled the Law culminated in their fear as to what after death might be their fate. For instance, Weber says "The constant fear of death permitted no joy in life." As proof he quotes a passage from *Tanchuma* which runs thus: "God has said: Death does not allow man to rejoice in this world, but in the world to come death shall be swallowed up for ever." The context clearly shows that the meaning is: "The sadness of life and its transitoriness permit no joy upon earth, but in the eternal security of the life to come joy will be unending." The passage merely repeats the conventional commonplace that in comparison with that future existence which will be the lot of every virtuous or repentant Israelite, the present life is one of gloom and

sorrow. With several other passages Weber is hardly more successful¹.

His great object, of course, is to show that there was no confidence, no trust in God, no assurance of salvation, no *Heilsgewissheit* in the German phrase. If proved, the charge would throw a flood of light upon the Epistle to the Romans. But the truth is that the Rabbis sought to observe the proper mean between easy security and needless fear. It says for instance in the Midrash: "The righteous, so long as he is on earth, must have no self-assurance." Or again, it says, (quoting the verse in Proverbs "Happy is the man that feareth always"): "That is the manner of the pious. Even although God gives them confidence, they never cease to fear." The meaning is that the righteous are not to get into a state of torpid confidence, as if they had nothing more to do, or as if there was no danger even for the best of them that they might fall a victim to temptation and sin. There is no implication that the righteous are to live in constant terror of God's judgments. Elsewhere the Midrash quotes the verse "Trust in the Lord and do good," and it observes: "It is like a market-master who went about testing weights. One saw him and hid. The master said: Why hide? Keep fair weights and fear not. So says the text: do good and have trust in God." Though Weber gives us no passages like these, that is no reason that such passages do not exist².

But then Weber would reply: Can a man say that he *has* done good? It is true that the Rabbis have some very strong passages about the constant assaults of the *Yetzer Ha-Ra*. On no virtue do they lay greater stress than on chastity, but like most oriental nations they believed that there was no virtue harder for man to secure. But does not the Christian too think it needful to pray: "Bring us not into temptation and deliver us from evil"?

¹ Weber, p. 335.

² Weber, p. 284; *Yalkut, Deuteronomy*, § 892.

To whichever side the unfortunate Rabbis incline, the theologians are down on them. Thus Weber says: "The Jew lived in constant terror as to what might befall him after death." And he quotes by way of proof the following passage from the Midrash: "When R. Jochanan was dying, he said: Bury me neither in black raiment nor in white, but bury me in grey raiment, in order that if I have to stand among the pious, I may not be ashamed, and if I have to stand among the wicked, I may not be put to shame." Immediately following this story about Jochanan is another story about R. Joshua. When R. Joshua was dying, he said to his disciples: "Bury me in white raiment, because I am not ashamed of my deeds and I am worthy to enjoy the presence of my Creator." Weber does *not* quote this story: it would not suit his purpose, but I should not be surprised if another Pauline theologian has cited it in order to prove the pride and self-righteousness of those intolerable Rabbis and Pharisees¹.

It is observed in the Talmud: "The Rabbis have taught that a man should always regard himself as half guilty and half innocent." The inference which you are intended to draw is, that while it is never too late to mend, it is also never too late to sin. The right attitude of mind is therefore one between careless confidence and a despairing fear. But the predominant stress is undoubtedly laid upon the folly of the second alternative. Whoever reads what the Rabbis have to say about Repentance can never believe that their religion was one of fear, or their deity a God who was believed to deal out in awful severity the irrevocable judgments of measure for measure. All that we can justly say is that the defects of a legal religion occasionally made themselves felt. Man was sometimes looked upon too much as a bundle of deeds and intentions. By some teachers he was perhaps too little regarded as a whole, possessed after a time of a certain fixity of character, which

¹ Weber, p. 384; *Bereshit* (*Genesis*) *Rabba*, § 96, § 100, Wuensche's translation, pp. 475, 501.

is little likely to change. The "I" tended to be lost in, and confused with, the external actions which it produces. Perhaps this defect is more noticeable on the side of the righteous than on the side of the wicked.

The Rabbis were well aware of the increasing power of sin, and how every yielding to temptation makes the next solicitation more difficult to resist. "The *Yetzer Ha-Ra* is at first weak as a woman, but at last strong as a man. At first he is as weak as a spider's web, but at last he is as strong as a ship's rope. At first he is but a wandering guest, at last he is the master of the house¹." They are also well aware of the psychological puzzles of sudden conversion from evil to good, and they are never weary of accentuating the possibility of repentance. Yet perhaps it is but a false logic which led them to lay not indeed equal but yet considerable stress upon the uncertainty of the good. They did not adequately realize that man is more than his actions, and that to obtain his worth you cannot strike a balance between his good deeds and his bad. They did not perhaps adequately realize the complexity of character or appreciate the mystery of personality. They felt to the full the joy which religion could give; they believed in a God of mercy, and by none has God been more deeply loved and more gladly served, but, whether it was that they had not enough varied intellectual interests or because of an inadequate psychology which the legalism of their religion suggested to them, they did not sufficiently realize that the righteous lover of God cannot fall away into mortal sin, that though he may not be sinless, he may yet reach a calm confidence a serenity of soul, a freedom from temptation, which is nevertheless altogether different from carelessness or pride. They did not perhaps sufficiently realize the truth of that profound saying of Goethe's: "Ein guter Mensch, in seinem dunklen Drange, ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst."

¹ Weber, p. 233.

Yet when by pure accident I chance to read the odd interpretation which the Midrash gives to the verse in Proverbs, "She laugheth at the time to come," I wonder how far what I have just said may be correct and accurate. "God," says the passage on which my eye happened to fall, "in the hour of their death shows unto the righteous their reward and gladdens them. For the Psalmist says: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his pious ones. When, then, does God reveal to the righteous the precious gift which he has appointed for them? In the hour of their death. Then they see it and laugh. Therefore the verse runs: She laughs at the time to come." (The Midrash translates: "She laughs at the last hour.") Not less interesting is the following: "According to R. Chija bar Abba, R. Jochanan said: If the majority of a man's years have passed without his having sinned, he will never sin. And R. Shila said: If a man has once or twice had the opportunity to commit a certain sin, and has not committed it, he will never do so." Truly one cannot easily get to the bottom of the Rabbinic theology¹!

It may be said that in all the foregoing I have largely missed the point. The new confidence of the Christian is not because of works, but because of faith. The very nature of his confidence precludes the possibility of pride. If you can only win "confidence" or *Heilsgewissheit* by works, you must either despair, if you have not got it, or swell with pride, if you think that you have.

It is here that the unsystematic nature of the Rabbinic religion again comes in, together with its saving common sense, its strange combinations, and its childlike faith. God and Israel are on terms of intimacy and friendship. By one means or another—this is really a dominant note of Rabbinic Judaism—all but the truly unrepentant sinners and heretics must and will be "saved." God loves Israel too deeply to allow them to perish without making every effort and

¹ *Shemot (Exodus) Rabba*, LII, Wuensche's translation, p. 345; *Yoma*, 38 b, Wuensche, *Die haggadischen Bestandtheile*, I, p. 367.

arrangement he can to secure their salvation. He gave them the Law in order that wherever possible, by glad obedience to its behests, they might secure the life to come at least partially by their own "merits." But where this method fails, he has others. For he can always give "for nothing": he is glad to show grace and forgive.

As God's glory and promises are inseparably connected with Israel, he saves and delivers "for the sake of his name." This divine motive, already familiar to Biblical writers, is maintained and appropriated by the Rabbis. This is also the case with the merits of the fathers. Here too a Biblical motive is carried on and expanded. The simple way in which these two methods or motives of the divine compassion are familiarly used may be conveniently illustrated by the following Rabbinic prayer, which early found a place in the liturgy and is still retained: "With abounding love hast thou loved us, O Lord our God, with great and exceeding pity hast thou pitied us. O our Father, our King, for the sake of thy great name, and for our fathers' sake, who trusted in thee, and whom thou didst teach the statutes of life, be also gracious unto us and teach us. O our Father, have mercy upon us; put it into our hearts to learn and to fulfil in love all the words of thy law. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast chosen thy people Israel in love ¹."

But I pass from this point of the merits of the fathers, and also from that of the service wrought to average or sinful humanity by the special righteousness of exceptional heroes and saints (Weber, p. 298) to the fundamental and immensely important subject of Repentance.

In no other respect do the Epistles of St. Paul more clearly show their curious lack of relation to the actual religion of his contemporaries. And yet it is just here where the very hinge of his whole theology is fixed. I am

¹ Daily Prayers: Spanish and Portuguese and Italian Rites. The German Rite happens to omit "for the sake of thy great name." Cp. *Babylonian Talmud, Berachoth*, 11 b. The date is the second century, at latest.

at a loss to explain the puzzle. But all I have to do now is to show that the puzzle exists.

The theologians make the matter easy by ignoring the difficulties, and (I regret to add) by a strange inaccuracy. I will take Holtzmann as an example. In his excellent account of the Pauline teachings he says: "Ancient thought in general, but in particular the religious consciousness of the latter Judaism, regulated the relations between the Deity, who represented the moral requirements and avenged the transgressions of them, and men, from the axiom that on the one hand compensation must be made to requiting justice for guilt incurred, a sacrifice must fall, but on the other, an innocent person may intervene for the atonement of the offence, and thus take the penalty upon himself." Dr. Cone seems taken in by this unhesitating assertion; he quotes Holtzmann's clear statement in a footnote (I have borrowed his translation), and himself says: "It must not be forgotten that Paul thought of God's relation to man in accordance with the judicial idea of Judaism, to which the Law was inexorable. It was an expression of God's attitude toward sin, and must take its inevitable course of retribution unless an atonement was provided. The thought never appears to have occurred to Paul that God could arrest the penal operation of the Law on any other condition, but must allow it to proceed on its remorseless infliction of death and destruction¹." Dr. Cone is right: "the thought never appears to have occurred to Paul," but that is just the extraordinary part of the matter.

But first of all let us return to the Rabbis. Vicarious atonement is not unknown to them. The passages cited by Weber (p. 328) are quite accurate. "There lies atoning efficacy in the death of the righteous." "When there are righteous men in a generation, God lets them die (or suffer?) for the sake of others, and when there are no righteous, then the innocent school children are taken²."

¹ Cone, p. 258.

² Weber, p. 328.

But all such passages, and for the matter of that, all passages relating to the "merits of the fathers" or to the "merits of the righteous," are but as a drop in the ocean compared to the overwhelming mass of passages about Repentance and Forgiveness.

God has put into man's hands the key by which he can always open the door which sin may temporarily have shut between himself and his Maker. "Great is the power of repentance for it reaches to the throne of glory." "If a man has slandered his neighbour publicly, and wishes to be reconciled to him, his neighbour says, First summon those before whom you have slandered me, and then I will be reconciled to you. But God acts not so: man stands and reviles him and blasphemes in the street, and God says, Repent in secret and I will receive you." "The angels sought to shut the windows of heaven, that Manasse's prayer might not be heard, for they said unto God, Can a man who has set up an idol in the temple repent? But God said, If I receive him not in his repentance, I shut the door upon all penitents. So God bored a hole under the throne of glory and heard his supplication!" "Repentance is like the sea, for as the sea is always open, so too are the gates of repentance." "What shall be the punishment of the sinner? Wisdom answered, 'Evil pursueth sinners'; prophecy answered, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die'; the Law answered, 'Let him bring a guilt-offering, and atonement shall be made for him.' But God answered, 'Let him repent and *that* shall be his atonement.'" "Whence do we learn that of him who repents, God reckons it as if he had gone up to Jerusalem and rebuilt the altar and offered upon it all the sacrifices? From the verse, A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, for this is followed by, Do good to Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem: then wilt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness." "Where the penitent stand, the righteous cannot stand." It is idle to multiply these quotations. For mere con-

venience I have taken all except the last adage from a single section of a single Midrashic book¹. But there can be no question that they represent the regular doctrine of the Rabbis. There is no ultimate need of sacrifice or vicarious atonement, or of personal merit, or of the merits of others. All these things are good, but repentance is better. It is the more excellent way.

But what does repentance imply? Weber uses a mere phraseological idiom, without religious or moral significance, to try to prove that Rabbinic repentance has no ethical worth. I am bound to add that his editors have themselves called attention to his error while leaving it in the text. Weber says that the very phrase for "repent," namely "*do* repentance," shows that it is a *Leistung*, a mere outward deed or rite, no change of heart, no μετάνοια. But Weber himself admits that Rabbinic repentance includes shame, contrition, and sincerity. He is aware that it implies a *return* from evil deeds, and that the Rabbis, while extolling repentance, pour out their scorn upon those who attempt to cheat God by a merely verbal or resultless contrition. Weber cites two Midrashic legends about Adam and Cain. According to this story God urged Adam to repent of his sin. But Adam refused. Twice did God repeat the summons to repentance, and twice did Adam refuse. Then only was punishment pronounced upon him. In the case of Cain the difficulty occurs: Why was the murderer let off so easily? The Midrash can only explain this on the assumption that he had repented of his sin, though it is also suggested that his repentance was merely outward and deceptive. But why these legends show the worthlessness of Rabbinic repentance I am at a loss to understand.

The real danger of the Rabbinic doctrine was somewhat different. The teachers were well aware that, in order to have any religious value, repentance must be sincere and effective, but their constant praises of its powers and

¹ *Pesikta Rab Kahana*, XXV, Wuensche's translation, pp. 224-239.

their incessant iteration of the ready forgiveness of God were not without their perils. "God says: Open me a gate that is as wide as a needle's eye, and I will open you a gate which horses and chariots can pass through." Such doctrine, however beautiful and true, had obvious dangers when it was linked to and associated with an institution like the Day of Atonement. The Rabbis were careful to lay down the teaching that the Day of Atonement only secured God's forgiveness on the terms of repentance, and even then only for sins committed against God. For sins against your neighbour no forgiveness could be obtained unless and until you had made good to your neighbour the injury you had done him. And if a man says in his heart, "I will sin, and the Day of Atonement will secure my forgiveness," for such a one, say the Rabbis, the day brings no forgiveness. With wonderful tact they chose for the prophetic lessons of the day, first the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, describing the *moral* character of the true fast, and secondly the book of Jonah, concerning which they are at pains to point out that God paid no heed to the sackcloth and ashes, but that when the Ninevites turned from their evil way and God saw their *works*, then he forgave them¹. Nevertheless the Day of Atonement, with its implied doctrine of a big national forgiveness year after year, inevitably tended to certain immoral superstitions; against these Jewish teachers in every age have had to fight. But these superstitions and the too complacent acceptance of the doctrine of repentance are all on the line of making sin too easy and God too lenient. So far from erring on the side of severity, they err on the side of compassion. The Jews were perhaps a little too inclined to think that God must inevitably pardon their transgressions. As Heine said, *C'est son métier*. He can no other.

It is surely a most extraordinary thing that of all this

¹ *Mishnah Taanith*, II, 1. Wuensche, *Die haggadischen Bestandtheile*, I, p. 436.

Jewish scheme of justification St. Paul says never a word. According to the Jewish mind, the entire scheme of Pauline theology was absolutely unnecessary. God had already provided a reconciliation, and he had so constituted the nature of man that he was able, if he chose, to take advantage of it. So far as man failed to fulfil the divine commands, he could yet be reconciled to God by repentance and by the Day of Atonement. Instead of the Law "working wrath," it worked reconciliation, peace, forgiveness. The deliverance from sin is wrought by human repentance and divine pardon.

Paul's theology substitutes another manner of justification, another method of reconciliation, which it is quite possible to argue is higher, more satisfying, more permanent. Franz Delitzsch, great scholar, keen conversionist, and noble soul that he was, readily realized and acknowledged the difference between the Jewish and Christian point of view. He quotes the section of the *Pesikta* from which my own quotations about repentance are mainly culled, and says: "According to the Jewish doctrine, God lets himself be reconciled through repentance; according to the Christian doctrine, he is reconciled (*versöhnt*) through the mediation (*Mittlerwerk*) of Christ, and the individual man is reconciled to God (*versöhnt*) when in faith and repentance he accepts the mediation, which is common and general for all mankind. The New Testament method of salvation (*Heilsordnung*) has the same sound as (*lautet auch wie*) *jer Maccoth*, I, 6 לֵי יַעֲשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה וַיִּתְּכַפֵּר לוֹ ('let him repent and receive atonement'), but repentance is not the factor which atones (*das Sühnende selbst*), but only the way to receive atonement (*der Weg zur Versöhnung*)¹." In other words, Rabbinic Judaism requires and postulates no intermediary between God and man.

Dr. Cone rightly says of the Pauline theology: "Justification as God's act is negatively the non-imputation of their sins to men, which is equivalent to forgiveness.

¹ Delitzsch, *Translation of the Epistle to the Romans into Hebrew*.

Satisfaction for sin having been rendered on the Cross, forgiveness is not prominent in the Apostle's thought¹." The very word *μετάνοια* (so far superior, in Weber's judgment, to the Hebrew תשובה), together with its derivatives, is only met with about four times in all the six epistles, and even on those occasions it has little or no doctrinal importance. So too Ménégoz most aptly says: "Jésus-Christ n'a pas été pardonné: il a expié les péchés et il a été justifié. Le croyant qui s'identifie avec Christ est de même considéré comme ayant expié ses péchés par la mort, et comme ayant satisfait ainsi à la justice divine, il n'est pas pardonné, mais justifié." "La justification n'est pas un pardon, c'est une justice nouvelle²."

It may, then, be that the new justification is a far higher thing than the old repentance and forgiveness; but is it not strange that Paul, in criticizing the Law, or in arguing with the Jew and with Jewish-Christians, should never touch on this fundamental point of difference? Is it not strange that he should not mention a matter which to every Jew was of such absolutely vital importance, never seek to anticipate a reply which the Jews would infallibly make to his attack upon their creed, and to the need of another and better means of reconciliation with God? The old doctrine, like the new, is susceptible of criticism; what religion, what theology is not? It might have been argued that the old method was on the one hand too facile, on the other too ineffective; that the process of sin and forgiveness was repeated again and again with no permanent and satisfying result; that what was wanted was not a mere outward pardon for sin, but a method by which pardon would be necessarily and mysteriously followed by a change of heart and a regenerate life. Such a criticism, while quite capable of receiving a rejoinder, would at any rate have compelled attention. But, instead of this, St. Paul beats

¹ Cone, p. 360.

² Ménégoz, *Le péché et la rédemption après St. Paul*, pp. 271, 274. The passages are quoted by Holtzmann, II, p. 127, n. 2.

the air with words, which, magnificent as they are, seem out of relation to the actual Jewish religion. They leave the impression: either this man was never a Rabbinic Jew at all, or he has quite forgotten what Rabbinic Judaism was and is.

According to the rigid theory of St. Paul's theology, no Jew should be anything but a sinner, and no Christian should be anything but a saint. "In the passage from the sphere of law to the sphere of grace, the dominion of sin has come to an end. The believer can sin no longer." "Such," says Holtzmann, "is the theory." But the "evil reality does not answer to the excellence of the construction. As a latent force sin still operates, so long as man lives both in the spirit and in the flesh together¹." It is still necessary (though on paper or by theory it should be superfluous) to warn believers to cleanse themselves from defilement in the fear of God. Salvation has still to be worked out with fear and trembling. There are men who believed in Christ, and yet, after the new life had begun, became guilty of covetousness, of drunkenness, of extortion, of fornication, of incest. No man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit; yet the old leaven is still not entirely removed.

No one would desire to press these facts too hardly. Christianity is not less great because from the very beginnings of its history there have been many bad men who called themselves Christians, or because there were many sincere Christians who, in this point or in that, were yet guilty of error and of sin. Nor shall we, standing on the eve of the twentieth century after Christ, value the nobility of St. Paul's Epistles the less, because we have to realize that there are weak points in his armour or that his theory is rather an ideal than a fact. But if we recognize that the Christian was not necessarily a saint because he believed in Christ, shall we not play fair and recognize that the Jew, because he lived under the Law, was not necessarily a sinner?

¹ Holtzmann, II, p. 152 fin.

On the Pauline theory a sinner he must be. Theoretically there could never have been and there can never be a really good man under the Law. The Jew must indeed be not only as bad as, but he ought to be far worse than the gentile. For the Law is the strength of sin. Not only is the quality of sin worse—for without Law there is no transgression—but, as Holtzmann quite properly points out, in quantity of sin also the Jew must be superior. From Moses to Paul there must have been nothing but sin; the constant consciousness of failure must have perfectly corresponded with reality. Is this consequence of Paul's theory in consonance with the facts? Or is this another instance of my contention that there is much in Paul which, while dealing *with* Judaism, is inexplicable *by* Judaism?

We are naturally concerned most nearly with Paul's own contemporaries, but, on the theory, so long as men and women live under the Law, the Law must produce its inevitable results. There is no reason why the Jews of A. D. 500 should have been a whit better than those of A. D. 50; nor is there any reason why those who live under the Law in 1900 should be other than those who lived under it in 190. But even within the limits of St. Paul's own age, the matter is serious enough to demand the most careful consideration. Has this consideration been shown? Has the Rabbinical literature been adequately read by those who pronounce judgment? Is it fair to take the New Testament as the sole authority? Are we not all of us enough critics to see that so far as Paul is concerned it is eminently to his advantage, it is part of his case, to paint Jewish morality as darkly as he can, or that (so far as the Gospels are concerned) a preacher's sermons and a religious reformer's speeches, reported by prejudiced parties at second-hand, cannot and must not be taken, without the most careful testing and sifting, as incontrovertible evidence of the moral lives and religious ideals of the great bulk of his contemporaries? How that testing and sifting is to

be effected without a prolonged study of the Rabbinical literature, I fail to understand.

Even English theologians (and surely *English* theologians should be fair) seem to me to blame in their hasty and unqualified condemnation of the Rabbinic religion. Is it not possible to be loyal to the Master without throwing mud at his race? Thus Dr. Sanday writes, "The Jews were at the head of all mankind in their privileges, but morally they were not much better than the gentiles. The truth must be acknowledged; as a system, Law of whatever kind had failed. The breakdown of the Jewish Law was most complete just because that Law was the best¹." Where is the evidence? None is offered, except the *ipse dixit* of St. Paul. But if the breakdown were so complete, is it possible that both the practical and theoretical ethics of the Rabbis would be as noble and as delicate as they are? If the Law broke down—and remember that it was the Law and nothing but the Law which was the religious motive of all Jewish life for centuries after Paul—would those famous words of Zunz, which George Eliot has immortalized, be true: "If there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations—if the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews are among the aristocracy of every land—if a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies, what shall we say to a national tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?" No, if morally the Law had broken down, these martyrs and nobles, these poets, actors, and heroes would never have existed at all.

The main attack of St. Paul upon Jewish morality is confined to the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Elsewhere we have little, beyond casual expressions about his Jewish antagonists on which no sensible person would lay any stress (for who would trust an excited man when he speaks about his enemies?), or theoretic

¹ Sanday and Headlam, p. 188.

statements about Jewish pride and the rejection of Christ. The first two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans show many peculiarities. The special dogmas of Paul are conspicuous by their absence. A refined justification by works is the doctrine preached, culminating in the superb close. In fact, Paul introduces his dogmatic letter with a sort of sermon or diatribe, and fine as the sermon is, it has all a sermon's wonted exaggerations. It contains a tremendous castigation of existing society, whether Jewish or heathen. The heathen world is described much as in the Wisdom of Solomon or as in many passages of the Rabbinical literature. Idolatry is regarded not as a misfortune but as a crime, and every kind of moral offence is made to spring from it. This is familiar enough; the same statements meet us in Jewish sources. But then Paul turns the tables upon the Jews (and proves the point so vital to his coming dogma that all the world without exception is under the power of sin) by roundly asserting that the Jews are no better than their gentile neighbours. Even apart from coming dogmatic necessities which cast their shadows before, the sermon, taken with the proper grains of salt, was a good and useful sermon, not without its seasonable sting and justification. For, as I have already pointed out, the Jews, humble before God and among themselves, were proud towards the gentile. They did plume themselves upon their privileges, upon the special love which God bore to them as his children and his chosen. The theologians are quite right there, though, while they are glad to accentuate the Jewish pride in imaginary privileges, they do not like these privileges, even in the Jewish view of them, to include the loving friendship of God, because then all other useful counts of the indictment would *ipso facto* disappear. If the Jews were proud, they were also slavish and timid. For two religions of love there cannot be, according to these particularist theologians. Thus Jewish pride towards the gentiles is rightly censured by St. Paul. The Jews

spoke of themselves as the righteous, the saints, the elect, precisely as Paul plumes himself towards his enemies, but is humble towards God. Or again, just as Paul calls the Christians "saints" in relation to the outer world, while he is fain to acknowledge that the saints were not all saintly, so too was it with the Jews. There were among them, as among every nation and community, black sheep; there were formalists and hypocrites; there were doubtless also robbers and adulterers. Who denies it? Certainly not the Rabbis, for none attack the hypocrites or the unchaste more bitterly, more openly than they. But it would be no less absurd to make Rabbinic Judaism responsible for these black sheep, than to make St. Paul responsible for the vicious elements in his own communities. All we can rightly say is that just as Paul's doctrine could degenerate into antinomianism, so the Rabbinic doctrines could degenerate into hypocrisy and formalism. No religion can escape the defects of its qualities. But to ignore the qualities and make the whole thing a mass of defects is as false to logic as it is false to fact.

Thus, as a sermon, what St. Paul says of the Jews in the second chapter of the Romans (ii. 17-29) is not unreasonable. Its grand and noble teaching of the true Jew and the true circumcision recalls the best utterances of Amos and Isaiah. It is likely enough that many of the black sheep were foremost in contempt and hatred of the gentile—that besetting Jewish sin, so soon to be paralleled in the Church by contempt and hatred of the heretic. Rightly enough does Paul say to them: "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" But to suppose that the religious Jews of the time were a mass of hypocrites, adulterers, and robbers seems to me absolutely grotesque.

Canon Gore, as we have seen, does not agree with me. As his book on the Romans will probably be widely read, let us hear what he has to say. Paul, he declares, was "certainly right in his estimate of Jewish religion." There

is no clear sign that Canon Gore has read the Talmud and the Midrashim, or even the 5,000 pages of Wuensche. The New Testament seems enough for him. The religion of the Jews was, he says, "a matter of public opinion—with all the stagnancy which belongs to the public opinion of a compact society—not a matter which lived with ever fresh life in the inner relation of the conscience to God." This is a most extraordinary statement about a people who set God before their eyes and hearts with exceptional pertinacity and continuity, but much stronger statements are still to come. Canon Gore proceeds to quote the Gospels to show that what Paul attributes to the *religious* Jew (mark the word and its sting, though the italics are mine) is fully confirmed.

"Avarice," he says, was "a notorious sin of Jews." Do you mean to tell me that because a great preacher was to attack avarice to-day, therefore it would be right to say that avarice was a notorious sin of Christians, and of religious Christians to boot? If Canon Gore would even read that one book of Wuensche's, in which he has collected some of the Rabbinic parallels to the Gospels, he would know that the Rabbis themselves condemn the very same sins as Jesus. Charity and simplicity were two marked Jewish virtues, the offspring and product of the Law. Then, in spite of what Dr. Schechter and other scholars in easily available and accessible works have shown, the Jews are next accused of trying by means of religious craft "to evade the righteous claims of parents." As if the honour and love due to parents was not an almost exaggerated feature of the Rabbinic religion and of the Jewish character. Then, on the flimsiest of evidence, the charge of adultery is also brought home. And so, without any appeal to their own history and literature, we are concisely told that "the 'religious' Scribes and Pharisees (though not of course the best of them) were, in fact, as a body truly hypocrites, as our Lord summarily said they were."

For my part, I do not believe that Jesus ever said any such thing, but if he did he exaggerated. But note the qualification: "though not of course the best of them." But why *not* the best of them? Were they subjected to any other and higher influences? Were they not lovers of the Law? Would they not have given their lives rather than, as sign of apostasy, infringe the smallest of its precepts? Will Canon Gore go the length of saying that "the best of them" were good not because but in spite of their religion?

In a later passage Canon Gore returns to the charge. He wishes to explain what Paul really meant by "seeking to be justified by works of the law." It was, he says, "the attitude of the Jews, especially as they appear in St. John's Gospel." Observe the words "especially as they appear in St. John's Gospel." Would it not be fair to remember that almost all critical scholars regard that Gospel as written not only long after the death of Jesus, but written with an intense hatred of the Jews and with a wonderful dramatic power? In it the Jews are the men of darkness; the believers are the men of light. But let that pass. The Jews, our author proceeds to say, "were proud of their divine law and of belonging to the chosen people. They knew how to make good their standing ground with God. By keeping the law, as the law had come to be understood among themselves, they could accumulate merits altogether out of proportion to their failures or demerits. They could even be helped by the merits of the old saints. Thus they could stand before God as the basis of a certain engagement or covenant, into which God had entered with his people, and claim their due reward. This utterly demoralizing attitude—leading as it does to formalism and hypocrisy, or, at the best, unprogressive stagnation—this attitude, which left out of sight all the higher and infinite elements in the Old Testament, was the actual attitude of contemporary Pharisaic Jews."

Now, I have already declared that the Jews were proud

of their law, that, moreover, they were proud of their moral and religious superiority to the gentiles, that, as the defect of its qualities, their religion, like Calvinism or Catholicism, might and did lead to hypocrisy and formalism, but with these qualifications Canon Gore's statements are inaccurate. He has not attempted to prove his assertions; I will not attempt to prove mine. I will ask any candid person to read Wuensche through and to judge between us.

Canon Gore would have you believe that the law, "*as the law had come to be understood among them,*" meant nothing but ritual. It was thus easy "to accumulate merits" by observing it. Not even Weber would venture to go as far as this. Nothing but ritual: when over and over again we are told that its greatest elements are humility and charity and justice and chastity and love! "Claim their due reward:" when even so far as the Jew *can* observe the law, he knows that it is only God who, in his love for Israel, has given him the glorious power and privilege of observing it; when the Talmud again and again warns its hearers and readers against pride and self-righteousness, when every day humble prayers are poured forth to God for strength to do his will and for the pardon of sin. Surely we ought to know enough history and exegesis to realize that it was not *necessarily* "self-satisfied stagnation, slavery to convention, and moral hollowness and rottenness" which made the Pharisaic Jews "utterly resent the new light of the Gospel and reject the Christ." If it was these things then, will you say of us that it is these things now? For, as the Christ, we reject him still.

But the most singular of all the connotations given by Canon Gore to that "seeking to be justified by the works of the law" of which the contemporaries of Paul and all the subsequent generations of Jews were guilty is still to come. "By 'works' or 'works of the law,' St. Paul means an attitude towards God which left a man largely independent of him. Under the divine covenant the man

of the covenant has a certain task to do, a certain law to keep; that kept, especially in its external requirements as contemporary authority enforces it, he is his own master. He is entitled to resent any further claims upon him. This religious ideal means, as we have seen, pride, stagnation, conventionalism, hypocrisy. And the more it is considered, the more unnatural it appears. For—

(1) It ignores the fundamental relation of man to God, viz. that, as a creature, he depends absolutely and at every stage on God. He has no initiative in himself. Thus the only attitude towards God which expresses the reality is one in which God is recognized as continually supplying, or promising, or offering, or claiming, and man is continually accepting, or believing, or corresponding, or obeying.

(2) It ignores the ineradicable taint of sin in man, and the accumulated guilt of particular sins. A man may gloss over his inward sinfulness, and cloak and ignore his secret sins; he may live outwardly in high reputation; but if he comes to know himself, he knows himself as a sinner, who depends, at starting, absolutely on God for forgiveness and 'deliverance from coming wrath.'

(3) It is quite contented to leave all mankind, except a small elect body, out of all the conditions of acceptance with God¹."

To any one who (like myself) has even a casual and unlearned acquaintance with Rabbinic religion, this passage is almost funny. What the Rabbinic Jew, independent of God! still more the Rabbinic ideal—independence of God! The Jew his own master, whose pride was that every action of his life was wrought as in the presence of God! No words, indeed, could more aptly and succinctly describe the Rabbinic frame of mind and religious position than to say that "man depends absolutely and at every stage on God," and that he is "continually accepting, or believing, or corresponding, or obeying." Of this sup-

¹ Canon Gore, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I, pp. 96-8, 164-7.

posed independence it is safe to say that the Rabbinic literature shows not a single trace. And does Rabbinic Judaism ignore sin? What about the doctrine of the *Yetzer Ha-Ra*? What about the stress on repentance? Does Rabbinic Judaism know nothing of the doctrine that man must "know himself as a sinner" who depends upon the forgiveness of God? Let Canon Gore on the next Day of Atonement go into any little synagogue in Russia, whose worshippers have grown up under the very shadow of the Law, and there let him hear and find the answer.

But how about the last short paragraph of the indictment? Was Rabbinic Judaism "quite contented to leave all mankind, except a small elect body, out of the conditions of acceptance with God." In this charge there lies truth; but before I deal with it further, one single remark. Canon Gore deduces this charge from the law. It was the direct consequence of seeking justification by legal works. But is it not then an extraordinary thing that that phase or section of Christianity which has been most "contented to leave all mankind, except a small elect body, out of the conditions of acceptance with God," has precisely consisted of those who most utterly rejected works, had the deepest sense of the "ineradicable taint of sin in man," and most absolutely denied the possibility of any human initiative? So cautious must we be in religion of deducing one thing from another, or of a wholesale condemnation of another's creed. Human religions are as complex as human characters. Because a man believes *this*, it seems to you necessary that he must believe or be *that*, or because he holds *this*, it is therefore impossible that he should accept *that*. But the human mind can do wonderful things in the way of antinomies and contradictions, and the Rabbinic mind in this respect was one of the most wonderful. Canon Gore, for instance, observes that it "seems to be true to say that a really Christian theism, and a really Christian doctrine of human freedom, are inseparable from the belief in the possibility of wilful sin leading to final

ruin¹." Now to me such a belief seems utterly incompatible with a belief in the love of God and in the goodness of God, and yet I am as convinced that Canon Gore believes in the love of God and in the goodness of God as that I wrote this lecture with pen and ink.

The grave fault of the Rabbinic religion from the ethical point of view was its particularism. Though it is not *quite* true to say that it "was contented to leave all mankind except the Jews out of the conditions of acceptance with God," it is very largely true. The heathen were the enemies of Israel and of God, and though many teachers in Israel desired their conversion and believed that many of them would ultimately be converted to the true faith, the majority of Rabbinic Jews doubtless believed that the Resurrection would be limited to themselves. By what shifts and artifices and false reasonings and unnatural limitations and self-deceptions they arrived at this horrible conclusion, those translations, to which I have already referred, will clearly tell. For the Midrash shows Rabbinic Judaism in undress: its best without affectation; its worst without apology.

Without belittling the splendour and magnificence of his universalism, we may yet observe in St. Paul a measure of limitation. The idea of human souls "appointed to destruction" does not seem to fill him with horror. Is it certain that he believed that his enemies, the Jewish Christian agitators, all those who rejected Christ or rejected the Gospel, would assuredly share in the coming resurrection? It is open to doubt whether he held that there was any salvation or future life for the mass of heathen and of Jews who had died before Jesus was born. He prepared the way for that Christian particularism of belief which was so soon to grow up as a rival and competitor to the Jewish particularism of race.

But think not that I would not wish to add my grain of admiration and of gratitude for him who wrote: "There is

¹ Canon Gore, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 214.

no distinction between Jew and Greek." "There is no respect of persons with God." "And the greatest of these is love." Not till St. Paul had written did the prophetic universalism attain its goal. It can be appropriated, and I am glad to think it *has* been appropriated, by Jew as well as by Christian, and there can be added to it the further virtues of toleration and mutual esteem. I trust that nothing which I have said or implied about those great though human documents which you are leagued together to study has done violence to those virtues, whether in the letter or in the spirit.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.